

dola base in Kellogg in mid-December. The arcade offers over 25 video games and interactive virtual reality systems.

- Silver Mountain and Lookout Pass ski areas both benefitted from the large quantities of powdery snow during the holidays. The two weeks around Christmas and New Year are critical for the financial success of a ski season. With skiers and boarders coming in record numbers in late December and early January, the 2007-2008 season looks like a success, barring Chinook winds, avalanches, high winds or other weather misfortunes in the next month or two.
- With tourism on the rise and its population growing, Kellogg's retail and restaurant sectors are adding new businesses. Wildcat Pizza opened Dec. 7 at the Silver Mountain Gondola Village. The pizza restaurant delivers from Cataldo to Silverton. Ronda Nash recently opened Prospector Chocolates and Gifts, which shares an entry with the Historic Silver Valley Chamber of Commerce.

#### **IDAHO PANHANDLE**

- Economic development organizations and other community groups throughout the Idaho Panhandle wished Paul Anderson, a Coeur d'Alene-based manager for Avista Utilities, a happy retirement on Jan. 1 as he ended a 42-year career with the electric and

natural gas utility that serves most of northern Idaho and eastern Washington. Throughout his career, Anderson has participated in many community development efforts. The first economic development group he helped form was Silver Valley Forever, which sought to restore the valley's economic vitality after mine and smelter closures in the early 1980s. When he moved to Coeur d'Alene in the mid-1980s, he helped establish Jobs Plus, a nonprofit economic development organization that has succeeded in bringing 70 businesses and more than 4,000 jobs to Kootenai County. He has served as chairman of the Idaho Governor's Economic Advisory Council, Jobs Plus, Kootenai Medical Center Foundation and Idaho Panhandle Boy Scout Council. Community leaders throughout the region have praised Anderson's contributions to their communities. In November, Inland Northwest Partners, a consortium of economic development organizations, gave him a lifetime achievement award.

***See page 34 for Panhandle Idaho labor force and nonfarm jobs data table for November 2007.***

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**Clearwater, Idaho, Latah, Lewis & Nez Perce counties**

#### **ECONOMIC TRENDS**

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate jumped four-tenths of a point in November to 3.7 percent as shown in the north central Idaho data table on page 35. In November 2006 the rate was 4 percent. Nonfarm payroll jobs dropped by 40 from October. A bright spot was the job increase from the holidays a year ago in the trade, leisure and hospitality sectors.

#### **AREA DEVELOPMENTS**

##### **IDAHO AND LEWIS COUNTIES**

- The kind of business expansion happening on the Camas Prairie is so incremental that it's hard to see. At least four small-scale manufacturers are in

some stage of expansion. Combined, their investments exceed \$1 million and could add 25 jobs to the region over the next three years on top of the six new jobs created in 2007. The largest, Advanced Welding and Steel, is building a 30,000-square-foot plant near the Grangeville Bennett Forest Industries mill on U.S. Highway 95. It plans to add 10 to 15 employees to its crew of 26 in the next two to three years. The steel and red iron the business welds provide the structural support for hospitals and retailers such as Walgreens and Lowe's. The smallest, Gem Chain Bar in Grangeville, opened Aqua Jet, a business that slices steel, glass, rubber and plastic on a precision machine using water instead of heat. It enables the com-

pany to do more of the work on the components it makes for mechanical harvesting machines. It hopes to add two full-time employees and has expanded its shop. Other expanding manufacturers are Hillco in Nezperce and Intermountain Machine in Grangeville.

#### **LATAH COUNTY**

- Wheat growers in Whitman and Latah counties are seeing dollar signs as the price of soft white winter wheat continues to shatter records. The price per bushel stood at an all-time high of \$13.05 at the Portland Grain Exchange in December. Joseph Anderson, Latah County's representative to the Idaho Grain Producers Association, said "there just is so little grain out there for sale that the prices go up to meet demand." Heath Barnes, a grain merchandiser at the Genesee Union Warehouse, said poor crops and harvests throughout wheat-growing regions across the planet have led to incredibly tight world supplies. "You can point to almost every country on the globe, and they had a short crop," Barnes said. The high demand for wheat from countries like India, Egypt, Pakistan, Japan and South Korea has not decreased as the prices have risen, Barnes said, adding that there may be a point when wheat becomes too expensive for buyers, but he doubts the current price is anywhere near that mark. A weak U.S. dollar also makes wheat more affordable for other countries. The high demand and prices have led to roughly 90 percent of the 2007 harvest already being sold, Barnes said. In a normal year, a much higher percentage still would be unsold and available on the market. Low or nonexistent stocks could send prices even higher and suppliers scraping the bottom of grain elevators for wheat. "We are right now looking at the possibility of having no wheat in the U.S. come spring," Barnes said. "When we get late into the spring there might not be anything left to buy." Anderson said he expects next year's market to still be good for sellers even if the 2008 harvest is large. Current world stocks are just too low to be replenished in one season. Barnes said the strong outlook and the current market condition have resulted in more acres on the Palouse and other regions being dedicated to wheat.
- In neighboring Whitman County in Washington, the Port of Whitman has acquired land to increase the size of its industrial park in Pullman. A 53-acre tract adjacent to the 107-acre Pullman Industrial Park is part of the next phase of the park's expansion. Port Properties and Development Manager

Debbie Snell said the land will enhance the port's efforts to build creative environments that foster technology transfer and new business in the region. The \$330,000 parcel was purchased with a grant from the Washington Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development.

#### **NEZ PERCE AND ASOTIN, WASH., COUNTIES**

- Three welded-aluminum jet boats built at Lewiston's Riddle Marine will be featured on CBS-TV' "Amazing Race." The notoriety should benefit not only Riddle Marine but also the local jet boat industry as a whole. Product placement in television and movies is considered one of the most effective forms of promotion. Companies either pay big money to have their merchandise displayed as in the case of the foods that filled Jerry Seinfeld's kitchen on the popular television sitcom "Seinfeld" or they are chosen as Riddle Marine was. This is Riddle Marine's second Hollywood experience. In 1999 the company built small high performance boats for the James Bond film "The World is Not Enough."
- Potlatch Corp. is eliminating its unionized fire department in Lewiston and shifting the service to a contractor who will continue to have employees on site. The 11 full-time employees affected by the change will be allowed to apply for jobs with the contractor or seek employment not related to fire-fighting in the pulp and paperboard and consumer product segments of the plant. Company executives chose to make the move because firefighting isn't one of Potlatch's core functions of growing trees and manufacturing lumber, paperboard and tissue products.

***See page 35 for north central Idaho labor force and nonfarm jobs data table for November 2007.***

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# North Central Idaho Data – November 2007

## Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment – Nez Perce County, Idaho, and Asotin County, Wash.

	Nov 2007*	Oct 2007	Nov 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	3,070	29,590	29,480	-89.6	-89.6
Unemployment	1,120	980	1,190	14.3	-5.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.7	3.3	4.0		
Total Employment	28,950	28,610	28,290	1.2	2.3
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	29,880	29,430	29,380	1.5	1.7
Unemployment	980	830	1,140	18.1	-14.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	2.8	3.9		
Total Employment	28,900	28,600	28,240	1.0	2.3
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	27,610	27,650	27,220	-0.1	1.4
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,710	4,800	4,690	-1.9	0.4
Natural Resources & Mining	230	220	220	4.5	4.5
Construction	1,510	1,590	1,370	-5.0	10.2
Manufacturing	2,970	2,990	3,100	-0.7	-4.2
Wood Product Manufacturing	530	530	560	0.0	-5.4
Paper Manufacturing	1,090	1,080	1,080	0.9	0.9
Other Manufacturing	1,350	1,380	1,460	-2.2	-7.5
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	22,900	22,850	22,540	0.2	1.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,560	5,490	5,590	1.3	-0.5
Wholesale Trade	680	680	640	0.0	6.3
Retail Trade	3,650	3,580	3,750	2.0	-2.7
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,140	1,140	1,110	0.0	2.7
Information	420	410	440	2.4	-4.5
Financial Activities	2,060	2,070	2,100	-0.5	-1.9
Professional & Business Services	1,620	1,620	1,570	0.0	3.2
Education & Health Services	4,560	4,540	4,320	0.4	5.6
Leisure & Hospitality	2,510	2,520	2,480	-0.4	1.2
Other Services	1,160	1,160	1,130	0.0	2.7
Government Education	2,320	2,290	2,250	1.3	3.1
Government Administration	1,950	1,990	1,990	-2.0	-2.0
Government Tribes	740	760	670	-2.6	10.4

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month